

SCHOOL FOCUS

 **ATS VALLEY SCHOOL**





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Dera Bassi, Chandigarh

"Anyone can count the number of seeds in an apple, but none among us can count the number of apples in a seed."

The philosophy of the ATS Valley School is based on this paradigm, where each child is nurtured independent of others and in competition only with herself, not with anyone else. And that a school should nurture each seed for who knows how many apples it shall one day produce.

Building mental capacity

Curiosity is something that sparks imagination and creativity. For curiosity building, we have an X-why-Z programme from grade 1 onwards where children are encouraged to ask a 'Why' question every day. Even in kindergarten, we focus on inculcating 'Curiosity' by asking 'Open-ended' questions. Moreover, creating a teaching environment where children question everything and are curious to know about it. This not only builds curiosity but also hones their research skills.

To remove the dependence on rote learning we try a dual approach. One is through 360 degree lesson planning that integrates subjects horizontally, building connections with concepts. The other is through integrating into the curriculum from Grade 1 onwards lessons in logical and verbal reasoning. These help children think laterally and promote out-of-the-box thinking. It also prepares them for PISA-type questioning that comes in handy when they reach grade 10 and later in competitive examinations. Our school average in PISA testing is more than twice the national average.

Building character

The highlight of our curriculum is our character building programme named 'True North' which refers to the internal compass within all of us. Post our formal education, real-life situations require that we perform as honest hardworking citizens who face the ups and downs of life with equanimity. That is where our character traits play an important role.

Extensive research conducted by many renowned universities suggest the following very important and must-have character traits *viz.* honesty, trustworthiness, respect, sharing, self-control, curiosity, gratitude, optimism, zest, grit, resilience and humour. We teach each of these through specially developed modules which involve questionnaires and activities. For instance, we teach honesty by having class tests with no invigilation. The results of such activities are indeed heart-warming.

Only practical approaches are applied to make this programme a real success. For that, we have adventure activities like Rappelling, Flying Fox (annually) to help the children fight their fear,



regular sports and each child gets equal opportunity to participate in everything. Some of the activities are:

- Putting them into real-life situations
- Helping them overcome their fears
- Developing self-control and growth mindset-helping them to learn the things that they feel they cannot do.
- Making them self-dependent- Real Life Skills like nail clipping, shoe polishing, shoe lace tying, proper hand-washing, etc.
- Increasing their problem-solving skills
- Developing curiosity and humour

Each child has to partake in Group A activities that include Theatre, Art, Music and Robotics and Group B activities that include Tennis, Taekwon-Do, Cricket, Skating and Shooting. This participation helps improve their social and emotional skills.



Building confidence

Confidence is one very important aspect responsible for a child's mental as well as physical growth. We ensure that every child becomes stage friendly and confident enough to face a crowd. Although we do various activities to make them confident but the most important is our extensive theatre programme which starts right from Grade-Foundation. Then, we have Speaking Activities; there are child-sized podiums in each class. On routine basis, each class does speaking activities on the podium which helps them to speak in front of their peers. Other than that, we have Masti Ki Pathshala twice a year which is yet another platform where they showcase their talent.

We also do an MGA – Monthly General Assessment of children to keep a track of their progress (other than in academics) wherein every child is assessed, discussed and steps are taken for their further development. Areas where we assess in an MGA include peer relations, hygiene, food habits, etc.



own and manage the library register themselves (another way to teach them responsibility). They use the writing corner to express their creativity as they wish with no judgement on the correctness of their language.

The teacher that starts a grade 2 class in the leapfrog programme stays with the children in subsequent grades, thus taking onus for their learning for at least 3 years. She teaches at least 3 subjects out of 6 and is supported by a co-teacher so that all the corners are utilised for effective learning.

The entire programme aims to achieve experiential learning while the children are in an emotionally stable environment with a teacher they have known for several teaching cycles. The leapfrog programme is thus a school within a school and is showing great results by way of increased confidence and character of the children.

As can be seen from all of the above, our focus is on building complete adults – hardworking, fearless, confident, aware, thinking, and social and self-independent citizens of the country.

The school is spearheaded by the vision of Ms. Aprajita Singh and Mr. Sandeep Sehgal. Ms. Singh is an LL.B, MBA with specialisations in Counselling, Teacher Training and NLP. Mr. Sehgal, B.E, MBA

has extensive experience with the top schools of the country with IB, IGCSE, ICSE and CBSE backgrounds. Along with their team, they envision a school where books and texts are only one part of a child's growth, the real growth coming from instilling in children character and confidence through realtime interventions in the curriculum.

The Leapfrog programme

Borrowing from the antics of the common frog, which can leap extensive distances from a sitting position, the team at ATS Valley has conceptualised a programme where the learning outcomes take the children to a further point than they would with ordinary classroom teaching. This programme is from grade 1 to 4. The classrooms are twice the size of normal, with the extended area used for computers, a library, an art corner and a writing corner. The lesson plans for every subject and chapter mandate that students use these corners to adapt what they have learnt on the board so that the learning is real and immersive. Children learn to use computers not in a lab, but in their own home setting and on topics they have recently learnt. They use the art corner to express their learning in visual form. They browse books from the library on their

